

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed March 4, 2004. In the application as amended herein, Claims 1-26 are currently pending. Claims 1, 10, 12, and 21 have been amended. In light of these amendments and the below comments, reconsideration is earnestly requested. Applicant believes that the combination of claim limitations as recited in the amended application are not disclosed or taught by any of the cited references, alone or in combination.

CLAIMS REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 5, 9-12, 16, 20-23 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), alleging anticipation by McGill. Applicants have amended Independent Claims 1 and 12 and Dependent Claims 10 and 21. With these amendments, Applicants submit that McGill fails to disclose, expressly or inherently, each and every element of the invention as defined by the amended claims.

With regards to Independent Claim 1, McGill fails to disclose (expressly or inherently) at least the following element: "wherein the valve inlet, valve outlet and valve body are arranged so as to replace an existing piping portion provided between the meter outlet of the gas meter and the piping for supplying gas to the customer". McGill focuses on "retrofitting" a system - that is, supplementing the system with extra component parts. See, e.g., the first sentence of the McGill's Summary of the Invention: "The object of the present invention is to provide an easy way of retrofitting a generic

shutoff valve with existing plumbing having a gas meter. While it might be considered that, upon recognizing this desire, one could replumb the arrangement to fit the valve, the present inventor has arrived at a solution permitting simple and rapid installation of a gas flow valve at the location of the gas meter without replumbing." Therefore, Applicants submit that amended Independent Claim 1 is allowable. And, as Claims 5, 9, 10, and 11 are dependent on Claim 1, Claims 5, 9, 10, and 11 should also be allowable.

With regards to Independent Claim 12, McGill fails to disclose (expressly or inherently) at least the following element: "wherein a connection of the valve inlet to the valve body is substantially perpendicular to a connection of the valve outlet to the valve body". Once again, McGill focuses on "retrofitting" a system. To help accomplish this retrofitting, every valve 20 of McGill is shown linearly arranged from an inlet to an outlet. Therefore, Applicants submit that amended Independent Claim 12 is allowable. And, as Claims 16, 20, and 21 are dependent on Claim 1, Claims 16, 20, and 21 should also be allowable.

With regards to Independent Claim 22, McGill fails to disclose (expressly or inherently) at least the following steps: "disconnecting the first piping portion from the gas meter and the second piping portion", "connecting the valve inlet to the meter outlet", and "connecting the valve outlet to the second piping portion". Therefore, Applicants submit that Independent Claim 22 is allowable. And, as Claims 23-26 are dependent on Claim 22, Claims 23-26 should also be allowable.

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CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Examiner rejected the following claims, alleging obviousness over the following references:

Claim 2: McGill in view of Lyall;

Claims 3- 6, 14-15, and 17: McGill in view of Pietras;

Claims 7-8 and 18-19: McGill in view of Fridlyand.

For the reasons set forth above, Independent Claims 1, 12, and 22 are believed to be allowable. As Claims 2-8, 14-15, and 17-19 are dependent on Independent Claims 1, 12, and 22, Claims 2-8, 14-15, and 17-19 should also be allowable.

NON-REJECTED CLAIM

Claim 13 did not receive a rejection. Assuming arguendo that Claim 13 had received a rejection, Applicants submit that Claim 13 is allowable. Claim 13 is dependent on amended Independent Claim 12, which for the reasons described above is believed to be allowable.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the Application is in condition for allowance, and Applicants earnestly seek allowance of Claims 1-26. Should the Examiner have any questions, comments, or suggestions in furtherance of the prosecution of this Application, please contact Applicants' attorney at 214.979.3093. Applicants, through their attorney, stand ready to conduct a telephone interview with the Examiner to review this Application if the Examiner believes that such an interview would assist in the advancement of this Application.

To the extent that any further fees are required during the pendency of this Application, including petition fees, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any additional fees, including, without limitation, any fees under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or 37 C.F.R. § 1.17, to Deposit Account No. 23-3189 of Hunton & Williams (Dallas) and reference Attorney Docket No. 82274.91. In the event that any additional time is needed for this filing, or any additional time in excess of that requested in a petition for an extension of time, please consider this a petition for an extension of time for any needed extension of time pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 or any other section or provision of Title 37. Applicants respectfully request that the Commissioner grant any such petition and authorize the Commissioner to charge the Deposit Account referenced above. Please credit any overpayments to this same Deposit Account.

This is intended to be a complete response to the Office Action mailed March 4, 2004.

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Please direct all correspondence to the practitioner listed
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Respectfully submitted,

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